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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AmConGen, Lagos, Nigeria

DESP. NO. 10 DATE July 14, 1952

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF :

SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - June 30-July 12, 1952

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POLITICAL

Awolowo Proposes Lagos Town Council Change

Much comment generated Lagos over Western Regional Minister of Local Government AWOLOWO's proposals abolish present stumbling Lagos Town Council, replace with 40-member council headed by Oba of Lagos. Oba would replace Mayor but with only ceremonial functions, maximum of one-fourth council membership would be town's traditional Chiefs chosen from among selves without public election. Annual elections other members replaced by elections every three years, one rep for each of newly drawn constituencies replacing present wards. Bill may be introduced Western House of Assembly in September. All based upon assumption continued failure Kingsley MBADIWE's proposal to House of Representatives for independent status Lagos outside Western Region government. NCNC press opposed LTC change.

New Eastern Political Party

United National Party formed in East by well-known political independents and others. To organize first in East and Cameroons. Objectives listed as investment foreign capital with full Nigerian partnership, self-government as soon as possible, maintenance traditional influence local rulers, full unity of Nigeria and full personal freedom.

Minister of Transport to Visit Canada

Chief Bode THOMAS, Minister of Transport will attend Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for Nigerian House of Representatives in Canada beginning September 8. Minister to visit UK before going to Ottawa.

Northern Legislature Rejects Local Government Bill

Proposed reform of Native Authorities in North and establishment local government system less independent of regional control was defeated in Northern House of Assembly. Bill introduced by Secretary Northern Peoples' Congress largest party bloc, but defeated 56 to 25 with 12 abstentions. Ibrahim IMAM accused Civil Secretary of altering his bill without consultation, thus causing its defeat.

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ECONOMIC

Disturbing Factors Noted in Nigerian Agriculture

Severalpotentially unfavorable items observed in Nigeria's agriculture picture. Peanut pyramids in North still total about 95,000 long tons and railway transport to port far too slow. Peanuts will miss present good foreign market, with large stores to remain unmoved at time next buying season here. Several individual areas in Northern Region reported short on food production for local consumption. Cotton gins stacking processed cotton for lack of transport to cast. Peanut oil processing mills operating at substantial loss with no improvement vis-a-vis profit in sight. Palm oil mills handicapped by continuing undiminished opposition by native women in East. Swollen shoot in cocoa not effectively curbed yet. Railway still short of rolling stock and engines due failure UK manufacturers to meet delivery schedules, present stock shorter through increasing failure repair shops meet needs. Nigerian hides and skins trade in bad slump. Local timber not selling well on world market. Textile trade very slow.

Local Business Groups Report Huge Losses on Bogus Traders

Commercial people and concerned officials report monthly losses as high as £50,000 by foreign exporters on orders shipped to local "buyers" who never clear goods from customs. Good evidence to support belief local traders order without intention taking delivery, later buy goods at customs auction for fraction value. Situation old one but being aggravated. Responsible Nigerian backing official efforts curb this and encourage foreigners deal only with known firms. Nigeria Police to establish Fraud Squad with assistance of Scotland Yard for curbing these and other frauds. Pressure being brought to tighten laws in re business firms, bankruptcy, etc.

Mineral Royalties Announced

New Mineral royalty rates based London prices announced as follows: gold-10%; tin-16%; lead-2%; columbite-12%;and wolfram-5%.

Ban on Beer Imports

No further licenses to be issued in Nigeria for importation of European beer. Supplies will be limited to English and local beers. European brands heretofore most popular.

Rubber Factories for West

Western Regional Production Development Board announced plans to erect and operate two factories for processing of rubber lates, one at Benin, other at Umutu, Warri Province. Total investment estimated at £300,000.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Daily Success Editor Suspended

E. Metzger, pro-American editor of the Daily Success, Lagos, suspended two months, he reports, for refusing publish certain materials dictated by J . U. ISUMAN, publisher. Metzger said, at our 4th of July party, materials bordered on libel and sedition and that publisher had suspended him on half-pay to see if he were expendable. Meanwhile C. O. ANIYAM, formerly of West African Pilot, is dividing editorial chores with G. O. EGBUCHE.

Northern Region Proposes 500 Scholarships Next Year

Northern House of Assembly adopted motion for award 500 scholarships within Nigeria and the UK to northerners in 1953-54 estimates. Hon. Ibrahim Iman said scholarships would be tenable in UK and US and that Cambridge school certificate would be minimum qualification. Northern Minister of Social Services, Hon. Aliyu, Makaman Bida, said some scholarships would be awarded to study Arabic in Egyptian universities. He said some US schools not up to required standards on other awards.

Kings College Principal Named Deputy Director Nigerian Broadcasting Service

J. R. BUNTING, Principal of Kings College, Lagos, has taken over the duties as Deputy Director Nigerian Broadcasting Service. W. A. PERKINS has been named Acting Principal Kings College. Mr. Bunting returned this spring from tour of the United States during which he studied the methods of teaching civics and current events in public schools. His itinerary was arranged through USIE Lagos.

Press Commentary

West African Pilot headlined article on USIS radio dramatization of "The Liberty Bell" on July 4 with "U.S. Revolution to be Dramatized Over Local Radio"; phrase is not calculated to endear American activities in Nigeria to Government.

UK-educated Awolowo cracked at American-educated NCNC AZIKWE and OJIKE by noting "the coincidence of return of Nigerian holders of American Dr.Sc., Ph.D., Z.Y.M., etc. degrees with the infestation of Nigerian politics with 'crooks'".

Daily Success, small Lagos daily, attacked USIS for depicting U.S. as good and Soviets as bad; described USIE library as a "bundle of propaganda pamphlets and books studding the shelves there -- eulogizing everything American and dragging into the mire all things not American". Newspaper is one of heaviest users of

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USIE releases.

Japanese Journalist Speaks in Nigeria

Mr. Y. HORI, itinerant journalist, declared in Lagos speech that Japan is grateful to U.S. for financial aid but disagrees with American policy in Japan; said the Japanese will never forget the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Stated Japan is anxious to develop trade with West Africa and may appoint trade representatives to Nigeria.

Robert W. Ross

Robert W. Ross
Vice Consul

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